

Lake Oroville State Recreation Area



Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



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Discover the many states of California.™

Lake Oroville State Recreation Area

400 Glen Drive

Oroville, CA 95966

(530) 538-2219

*After the springtime
snow runoff, take a trip
up the middle fork of the
Feather River to see the
spectacular 640-foot
Feather Falls. When the
lake is high, you can boat
to within a quarter-mile
of the falls.*

Lake Oroville State Recreation Area

is located on the Feather River, about 75 miles north of Sacramento, in the chaparral-oak-pine belt of northern mother lode country. Lake Oroville is the largest state reservoir in northern California.

The lake's climate varies with the seasons. Summer temperatures at the lower elevations range from 85 to 100 degrees and from 60 to 70 degrees in the evenings. It is cooler year-round at the higher elevations, with winter temperatures ranging from about 30 degrees to the mid-50s. Annual rainfall ranges from about 26 inches near the Thermalito Forebay to about 60 inches at higher elevations. Spring and fall are usually mild, with pleasant days and cooler evenings.

NATIVE PEOPLE

For thousands of years, this area was home to the Northwest Maidu people. A typical village might consist of a few families, or it might have 500 or more inhabitants. Often there was a "main" village with sweathouses and other common-use ceremonial buildings. The Maidu were hunters and gatherers. Acorns were their main food source, and nutritional variety came from large and small game, nuts, berries, seeds, and fish from what is now the Feather River. In 1820 Captain Luis Arguello was exploring the area and named the river *Río de las Plumas* (River of Feathers) after he saw

what appeared to be many feathers floating on its surface.

The lives of the Maidu were disrupted after the 1848 gold discovery. When the Feather River was found to be rich in gold, entrepreneurs and gold seekers flooded into the area, taking Maidu land and establishing several small mining towns. Most towns are now under the lake. A tent city named Ophir became the present city of Oroville. The newcomers also brought diseases to which the native people had no resistance, so their numbers dwindled. Today many Maidu people live on local rancherias, including those at Oroville and Chico.

THE DAM

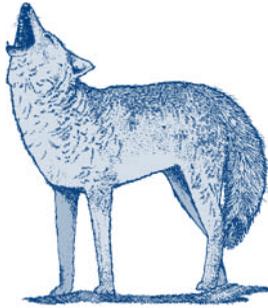
In 1967 Lake Oroville was created by Oroville Dam, at 770 feet the nation's tallest earthen dam. The lake conserves water distributed by the State Water Project to homes, farms and industries in the San Francisco Bay area, the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California. Oroville's facilities provide flood control, smog-free generation of electric power, and recreation. At its maximum elevation of 900 feet, the lake includes some 15,500 surface acres for recreation; 167 miles of shoreline allow boaters to land and explore the surrounding country.



Aerial view of Oroville Dam

WILDLIFE

An abundant, varied wildlife population inhabits Lake Oroville. Resident species include raccoons, turkeys, opossums, coyotes, tree and ground squirrels, rabbits, deer, skunks, ringtails, bears and many kinds of native birds.



Coyote

THE VISITOR CENTER

A visitor center complex atop Kelly Ridge features interpretive displays, an audio-visual room with on-request videos, and a 47-foot viewing tower overlooking the lake and dam. To reach the visitor center, continue up Oroville Dam Boulevard beyond the dam turnoff, or take Kelly Ridge Road off Olive Highway. Restrooms are located in the courtyard.

RECREATION

Lake Oroville offers camping, boat-in camping, floating campsites, horse camping and horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, both sailing and power boating, waterskiing, fishing, picnicking and swimming.

CAMPING

Reservations are recommended from late spring through Labor Day. Reserve all campsites at (800) 444-7275.

Loafer Creek—137 sites at the

Coyote Campground can accommodate tents or trailers up to 31 feet and campers or motorhomes up to 40 feet (no hookups). Drinking water and restrooms, coin-operated showers and laundry tubs are nearby. An RV sanitation station is available. Six group sites accommodate up to 25 persons each: limit of eight vehicles per site. A horse camp features 15 campsites, a restroom with showers, a corral and a horse tethering and feeding station. Large groups may reserve more than one site. A launch ramp is available.

Bidwell Canyon—75 sites with hookups accommodate trailers up to 31 feet and campers or motorhomes up to 40 feet. Facilities include a lakeside marina with a launch ramp, store, snack bar, fuel dock, boat rental and a pumping station for boat holding tanks.

Spillway—Shaded picnic sites and overnight camping for self-contained RVs are located at the north end of the dam. Drive across Oroville Dam to reach the facilities, which include a launch ramp and restrooms.

Lime Saddle—Both the hookup and non-hookup sites at this campground accommodate RVs. Features include a



One of the lake's floating campsites

five-lane launch ramp, picnic facilities and restrooms. The nearby marina offers boat docking, fuel, fishing boat rentals, boating supplies, a store and snack bar.

Floating Campsites

You will need your own boat to reach the ten 20' x 24' floating sites. Each site sleeps up to 15 people with a camp table, sink, propane barbecue grill (the park provides the propane), a food locker, a lockable closet, an accessible restroom, a covered living area, an upper sun deck/sleeping area and room for tents. Bring your own drinking water.

Boat-in Camps

Boat-in camping is first-come, first-served, and only in designated campsites identified by signs at beach areas around

the lake. Ask directions to your camp at the park entrance or the launching area. Each camp has six to twenty-six individual campsites; boat camps are located at **Craig Saddle, Foreman Point, Goat Ranch** and the **Bloomer Primitive Area** at Bloomer Point—Bloomer Knoll, Bloomer Cove and Bloomer Group Camp. The Bloomer group camp accommodates up to 75 people. Sites have tables, stoves, pit toilets and garbage cans. Bring your own drinking water.

PICNICKING AND BOATING

North Thermalito Forebay is reserved exclusively for sailboats, canoes, and other non-motorized boats. The shaded, grassy day-use areas have barbecue stoves and picnic tables. Four shaded ramadas can be reserved for picnic groups. A 200-yard sandy swimming beach has dressing rooms for men and women. Piped drinking water and restrooms are nearby.

The Forebay Aquatic Center is located at the North Forebay near the boat launch. Boat rentals and watercraft classes are offered through a collaborative effort between the Associated Students of CSU Chico, California State Parks, Dept. of Water Resources and Dept. of Boating and Waterways.

South Forebay has a launch ramp, paved parking and restrooms. Drinking water is not available. Power-boating and fishing are the main attractions in this area.

Loafer Creek Area has a swim beach and lawn area with 100 picnic sites and restrooms.

Overnight boating is permitted, but boats must have self-contained sanitary facilities, and all waste and water outlets on board must be sealed. Use sanitation stations around the lake.

Boat mooring is permitted except where posted otherwise; marina berths are leased by prior arrangement. Overnight camping on shore while boating is not permitted, with the exception of the boat-in campsites, but boaters are welcome to go ashore for day use.

SWIMMING

The Loafer Creek area and North Forebay near the Aquatic Center are the only designated swimming areas at the lake. No lifeguards are available at Lake Oroville; do not allow children to swim unattended.

FISHING

Rainbow and German-brown trout, large- and small-mouth bass, and some catfish and salmon are caught here. All anglers over age 16 must possess a California sport

fishing license. Check at the visitor center for “Slot Limit” regulations for black bass. Shore and boat fishing are permitted in the North and South Forebays, but no motorized boats are allowed in the North. Fishing and boating are not allowed in designated swimming areas.



The fishing is great year-round.

THE FEATHER RIVER FISH HATCHERY

The Department of Fish and Game operates a salmon and steelhead hatchery across the river from the city of Oroville. Underwater windows in the observation area near the parking lot permit close-up viewing of the fish when spawning.

<http://www.lakeoroville.water.ca.gov>

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Accessible features are dispersed throughout the park. At Loafer Creek, the visitor center is generally accessible, and Coyote Campground and Horse Camp have accessible campsites. At Bidwell Canyon, some accessible hook-ups are available, Big Pine and Gold Flat Campgrounds have accessible sites, the Tollhouse Visitor Center is accessible, and the bike trail is barrier-free. Three other trails offer some accessibility. Accessible picnicking and beach access are available, and the visitor center at Lake Oroville is generally accessible. For details and updates, call the park or see <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

PLEASE REMEMBER

Dumping—The dumping of waste or refuse in any of the area's water is prohibited at all times. Please help keep Lake Oroville clean. Sanitation stations and floating restrooms have been placed at strategic locations.

Driftwood—Because it is not part of the area's natural ecology, driftwood can be collected and used for fuel. It can be found in the lake and its tributaries or ashore between the actual lake level and the high-water mark.

BOATING

- **Boating Rules**—All boaters should be familiar with boating rules and regulations. Obtain a booklet called *The ABCs of California Boating Law* from the Department of Boating and Waterways or at any park entrance or marina.
- **Speed limits**—The speed limit is five miles per hour within 100 feet of a swimmer or 200 feet of any shore, boat launching facility or designated mooring area. Water skiing is not permitted in the narrow upper reaches of the lake's tributaries.
- **Boating Tips**—Floating logs and other driftwood are boating hazards, especially during the winter and spring when heavy rains wash dangerous debris into the lake.
- **Night boating**—Only boats equipped with the proper running lights may use the lake at night. The speed limit is five miles per hour.
- **Securing boats**—If you leave your boat to go ashore, be sure to tie it up securely.
- **Lake level**—Lake level fluctuates daily throughout the year. Summer and fall draw down (lower); winter and spring rise. This change in surface level also changes the location of shoals near shore, so be alert to fluctuating hazard conditions.

CAMPING

- **Fires and Fuel**—In summer extreme fire hazard conditions exist; fires and smoking are permitted only in designated sites. Call 911 or contact the nearest park employee to report a fire.
- **Firewood**—Dead wood (not driftwood) is a normal part of the park's ecology, so its collection and use are prohibited. Fuel and firewood can be purchased at the park entrance. Use gas-fueled camp stoves in designated camping or day-use areas.

Legend

- Paved road
- Unpaved road
- Trail
- Horses Prohibited
- Accessible Feature
- Boat Launch
- Boating
- Boat-In Campground
- Boat-In Group Campground
- Bridge
- Campground
- 1-21 Campsite Numbers
- Cartop Launch Only
- Enroute Camping
- Floating Campsite
- Group Campground
- Horse Campground
- Locked Gate
- Marina
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Restrooms
- RV Sanitation Station
- Showers
- Supplies
- Swimming
- Wi-Fi
- Viewpoint

This park is supported in part through a nonprofit organization. For more information contact: Bidwell Bar Association 917 Kelly Ridge Road Oroville, CA 95966 • (530) 538-2219

Cartop boat launches are subject to closure during low lake levels.

Floating campsite locations are subject to change. Call park office for current locations.

LIME SADDLE CAMPGROUND

Map showing campsite numbers (1-16, 17-36, 37-44) and facilities like the Lake Oroville Marina at Lime Saddle.

BIDWELL CANYON AREA

Map showing campsite numbers (1-39, 40-75) and the Lake Oroville Marina at Bidwell Canyon.

FOREBAY AQUATIC CENTER
Boat rentals and watercraft classes
www.aschico.com/aquaticcenter

Inset Map: Lake Oroville SRA

Regional map showing Lake Oroville State Recreation Area in context with surrounding areas like Chico, Colusa, and Marysville.

LOAFER CREEK AREA

COYOTE CAMPGROUND

Map showing campsite numbers (1-2, 3-43, 44-81, 82-137) and viewpoints like Little Bald Rock and Big Bald Rock.

Feather Falls is 640 feet tall and the sixth highest in the U.S.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Clay Pit State Vehicular Recreation Area 2-1/2 miles from Oroville (530) 538-2200
- Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park, in Chico at 525 the Esplanade (530) 895-6144

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